

17<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Hooray! We are able to come back together tomorrow! I want to extend my appreciation of the support right across our community as we have adapted to the challenges of the last few days. Our students and staff, with family support, have adjusted to this snap lockdown remarkably. Tomorrow, Thursday 17<sup>th</sup>, we return to onsite learning.

It appears that most things will resume as planned; however, the wearing of masks will be a requirement of all secondary students both when inside and whenever social distancing cannot be maintained outside. Please talk with your young person about this as the concept of social distancing is challenging for adolescents.

I ask families to please ensure students attend school wearing a mask and with spares (in the event theirs breaks) unless your student has an exception under the guidelines. This includes students who are over the age of 12 and are unable to wear a face mask due to the nature of their disability. This also includes students or staff who have a medical condition, such as problems with their breathing, a serious skin condition on the face, a disability or a mental health condition. Where medical conditions prevent a community member from wearing a mask, we ask that families provide documentation from their treating health professional, please.

Students are required to wear masks when travelling on and waiting for buses.

We are going to emphasise again the importance of hand sanitising regularly with students.

The most important action school communities can take to reduce the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19), is to ensure that any unwell staff and students remain at home, even with the mildest of symptoms. If a household member is unwell and displays COVID-19 symptoms, that person should undertake testing. All members of the household should observe isolation until a negative COVID test is returned.

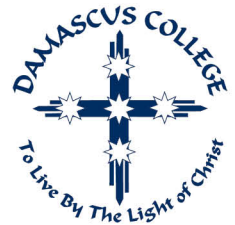
I thank Ann and Brendan Bawden, House Leaders and Assistant Principal Andrew Robertson for the work that has occurred to facilitate Year 7 activity days for Rice and Xavier House students on Thursday and for St Martin and McAuley students on Friday in lieu of Year 7 camp. Could Year 7 parents please go into the PAM module to complete the student permission forms prior to your child's activity day. Students will travel to Log Cabin camp for a day of activities and relationship building each day.

Year 7 students will also undertake rescheduled standardised PAT Reading testing next Tuesday and Wednesday. This is a standard benchmarked assessment that we undertake with students to target specific learning support. A formal letter will be sent out to Year 7 parents and guardians outlining further information regarding the PAT tests.

We extend our thoughts and prayers to the St Aloysius community whose Grade 5 and 6 students visited the Queen Victoria Market last Thursday. Many of these families are members of our own community. The timing of their visit has resulted in staff, students and families who cannot isolate away from attendees, needing to observe a two-week isolation

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period. Damascus College has a support plan in place for those secondary students from St Aloysius families who need to continue to observe the isolation for the next week. I will communicate with families who have listed St Aloysius as their primary school directly. If you have a child in Grade 5/6 at St Aloysius and do not receive a communication from the College today, could you please contact [principal@damascus.vic.edu.au](mailto:principal@damascus.vic.edu.au)

If you have a concern about your young person being able to attend onsite (unless you are a St Aloysius family), please contact the College for support.

As we understand it, there is no limitation on parents coming onsite, beyond the requirement to wear a mask and access through the College office.

To ensure appropriate social distancing, while the weather remains pleasant, we ask students to take their breaks outside. The canteen operators have moved lunch ordering to the **cashless QuickCliq online ordering** platform as the only way to order lunches. Parents, students or staff will need to visit the website [www.quickcliq.com.au](http://www.quickcliq.com.au) to sign up and register. Lunches will be able to be ordered up until 9:00am on the day required. Students need to order their lunch by 9.00am daily.

We are currently awaiting directions from Rowing Victoria regarding regattas. I will communicate specifically regarding the Head of the Lake, once more information is known for Friday's planned regatta. The training schedule for tomorrow is available on the Team app.

Today is Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of Lent. The forty days preceding the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our Liturgy Coordinator, Cathy Prunty, shared this 3'40" reflection with staff and students to centre us on this most unusual Ash Wednesday. Our College Captains; Maya Tolliday and Shaun Leonard, with the beautiful support of Year 7 student, Meg Mason and Cathy Prunty created this reflection. I encourage families who may have had no other opportunity to reflect this Ash Wednesday to take this opportunity to reflect and perhaps enter into conversation with your young people of the significance of the Lenten period. The reflection can be here; <https://youtu.be/meR1B43YAdk>

As I indicated in my communication on Monday, if your family is struggling in any way in relation to your young person's education with Damascus College, please reach out to your TA, House Leader, counselling team, finance team or member of College Leadership. We are here to support your family.

As a community, we are proud of our ability to respond agilely to change this past week, and we are well-positioned if we need to respond to change again in the near future. Well done and thank you!

Until next week...

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